


Compliance Assistance



**Pesticide  
Safety  
Training**  
*for Employees  
Handling Pesticides*

EMPLOYER  
RESPONSIBILITIES



California's worker safety regulations specify safe work practices for employees who **handle** pesticides. This booklet summarizes your responsibilities as an employer to **assure** that you provide the required pesticide safety training to your employees.

This booklet is not intended to replace product label information, the Pesticide Safety Information Series (PSIS) leaflets, or the California Code of Regulations. It is a reference tool that summarizes specific regulatory requirements and responsibilities that you – the employer – must follow. You are encouraged to contact the Agricultural Commissioner's office in the county or counties where you operate for any additional requirements specific to your area.

See “**Definitions You Need to Know**” at the back of this booklet for explanations of highlighted words.

## What You Need To Do

- **Assure** that each employee assigned to handle pesticides is adequately trained in general pesticide safety and about correct pesticide-handling procedures BEFORE they are allowed to handle pesticides.
- **Develop** a written training program for your handler-employees that describes the materials (study guides, pamphlets, pesticide product labeling, PSIS, MSDS sheets, slides, books, video tapes) and information that will be used, and identify the person or firm that will provide the training.
- **Continually update** their training to cover any new pesticides that will be handled and, repeat training annually.
- **Cover** the following subject areas, for each pesticide or chemically similar group of pesticides, to be used by your handler-employees.
  - **Pesticide product labeling** format and meaning of information, such as precautionary statements about human health hazards.

- **Hazards of pesticides (acute, chronic, and delayed effects, sensitization)** identified in pesticide product labeling, MSDS, or PSIS leaflets.
- **Safety requirements and procedures**, including engineering controls (closed systems, enclosed cabs) for handling, transporting, storing, and disposing of pesticides.
- **Environmental concerns** (drift, runoff, and wildlife hazards).
- **Purposes and requirements of medical supervision**, if organophosphate or carbamate pesticides with the signal word “DANGER” or “WARNING” are mixed, loaded, or applied.
- **Routes** by which **pesticides can enter the body**.
- **Signs and symptoms** of overexposure.
- **Emergency first aid** for pesticide overexposure.
- How to obtain **emergency medical care**.
- **Routine and emergency decontamination procedures**, including spill cleanup and the need to thoroughly shower with

soap and warm water after the exposure period.

- Need for, limitations, appropriate use, and sanitation of any **required personal protective equipment**.
- Prevention, recognition, and first aid for **heat-related illness**.
- **Warnings about taking pesticides or pesticide containers home**.
- **Pesticide safety requirements** (PSIS, MSDS).
- **Location of written** “*Hazard Communication Information For Employees Handling Pesticides*” (DPR leaflet PSIS A-8), other PSIS and MSDS information.
- **Employee’s rights:**
  - Right to personally receive information about pesticides to which he or she may be exposed.
  - Right for his or her physician or employee representative to receive information about pesticides to which he or she may be exposed.
  - Right to be protected against retaliatory action due to the exercise of any of these rights.

■ **Use a qualified trainer** to conduct the training for employees who will be handling pesticides for the commercial or research production of an agricultural commodity. The person conducting the training must be qualified as one of the following:

- A California certified commercial applicator.
- A California certified private applicator.
- A person holding a valid County Biologist License in Pesticide Regulation or Investigation and Environmental Monitoring issued by the Department of Food and Agriculture.
- A farm advisor employed by the University of California Extension Office.
- A person who has completed an “instructor trainer” program given by one of the following:
  - University of California, Integrated Pest Management Program (after January 1, 1993).
  - Other instructor-training program approved by the Director.
- A California licensed Agricultural Pest Control Advisor.

- A California Registered Professional Forester.
- Other trainer qualification approved by the Director.

■ **Record** the date and extent of initial and annual required training given and the job to be assigned. **Verify** each record with the employee’s signature and **maintain** this record for two years at a central location at the work place accessible to employees.





## ***What If You Don't Comply?***

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) and the County Agricultural Commissioners enforce California pesticide laws and regulations. It is your responsibility to take all reasonable measures to assure that employees handle and use pesticides in accordance with the requirements of law, regulations, and pesticide product labeling requirements.

If you follow the worker safety requirements, you protect your employee's health, the environment, and yourself. If you do not comply, you violate federal and State law. DPR and the Counties' Agricultural Commissioners have the authority to levy substantial penalties on persons who violate pesticide laws. Penalties range from \$50 for minor violations to \$50,000, and imprisonment for certain violations that have 'created or reasonably could have created a hazard to human health or the environment.' Also, persons who hold a license or certificate issued by DPR and who are found in violation can have their license or certificate suspended or revoked.



## Definitions You Need To Know

**Handle** – means mixing, loading, transferring, applying (including chemigation), or assisting with the application (including flagging) of pesticides (It does not include: local, state, or federal officials performing inspection, sampling, or other similar duties). Also, it includes:

- Incorporating (mechanical or watered-in) pesticides in the soil.
- Maintaining, servicing, repairing, cleaning, or handling equipment used in these activities that may contain residues.
- Working with opened (including emptied but not rinsed) containers of pesticides.
- Adjusting, repairing, or removing treatment site coverings.
- Entry into a treated area during any application or before the inhalation exposure level listed on pesticide product labeling has been reached, or greenhouse ventilation criteria have been met.
- Performing the duties of a crop advisor, including field checking or scouting, making observations of the well being of plants, or taking samples during an application or during any restricted entry interval listed on pesticide product labeling.

**Assure** – means to take all reasonable measures so that the behavior, activity, or event in question occurs. When the behavior, activity, or event in question involves or concerns an employee, reasonable measures by an employer include determining that the employee has the knowledge to comply; providing the means to comply; supervising the work activity; and having and enforcing a written workplace disciplinary action policy covering the employer's requirements, as well as other measures required by pesticide law or regulation.

If you have questions or need more information, please contact your local County Agricultural Commissioner's office.

A complete set of the worker safety regulations is available online from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation's web site at: **[www.cdpr.ca.gov](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov)**



**California Department  
of Pesticide Regulation**

A Department of the California  
Environmental Protection Agency